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Message Text

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H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 HA-05
OMB-01 /091 W
----------023854 171147Z /14
O P 171105Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4233
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 04287

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: OWEN MEETING WITH MUZOREWA

SUMMARY: MUZOREWA DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF ONE WAY OR THE OTHER TO AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. HE BELIEVES THE UN RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNAL AGREEMENT MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THAT BODY TO PROVIDE A "NEUTRAL" FORCE IN ZIMBABWE. MUZOREWA WAS CONFIDENT IN HIS DISCUSSIONS BUT SEEMED UNCERTAIN WHAT EFFECT THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE ON HIS POLITICAL PROSPECTS. END SUMMARY

1. OWEN (WITH ROWLANDS AND GRAHAM) MET WITH MUZOREWA, NYANDORO AND BULLE FOR AN HOUR MARCH 16. SEITZ REPRE-
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SENTED EMBASSY.

2. THE FOREIQN SECRETARY OUTLINED THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE AND AGAIN WENT OVER THE POINTS OF THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT WHICH HE CONSIDERED INADEQUATE. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THERE WAS ENOUGH COMMON GROUND AMONG ALL THE NATIONALISTS TO JUSTIFY A CONFER-

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ENCE. MUZOREWA SHOULD NOT LOSE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE HE IS A MAN OF PEACE. OTHERWISE, OWEN WARNED, THE BISHOP WILL BE INCREASINGLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE SMITH REQIME, AND AFTER THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, THE WORLD WILL HOLD HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF SMITH'S SECURITY FORCES.

3. MUZOREWA SAID HE DID NOT WISH NOW TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE OFFER OF A CONFERENCE. HE WOULD MAKE NO COMMITMENT, BUT HE EXPRESSED HIS SUSPICION THAT A CONFERENCE WOULD BE DESIGNED ONLY TO APPEASE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. THE BISHOP EXPLAINED HE HAD FOR YEARS TRIED TO BRING UNITY TO THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT, FIRST IN THE FORMATION OF THE ANC AND THEN AT GENEVA. MUGABE AND NKOMO NOW DEMAND THAT THE ANC SHOULD JOIN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. MUZOREWA COMPLAINED THAT THE FRONT, HOWEVER, IS NOT AN INDEPENDENT VOICE OF ZIMBABWE BUT RATHER THE EXPRESSION OF FRONTLINE POLITICS. THE FRONTLINE HAD SUCCEEDED IN CONTROLLING INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, HE SAID, AND IF POSITIONS WERE REVERSED WITH NKOMO SIGNING THE SALISBURY ACCORD AND MUZOREWA OPPOSING, THEN KAUNDA AND HIS FRONTLINE COLLEAGUES WOULD SUPPORT THE AGREEMENT SAYING, "THE LORD HAS SPOKEN."

4. MUZOREWA MADE THREE OTHER POINTS DURING THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION:
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A) HE SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN DISAPPOINTED IN HIS FAILURE TO ADDRESS THE SECURITY COUNCIL, BUT THE COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION NOW MADE IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN ZIMBABWE WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED "NEUTRAL." PERHAPS INDIVIDUAL COMMONWEALTH

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 04287

COUNTRIES COULD PROVIDE CONTINGENTS, BUT THE UN WAS
NO LONGER AN IMPARTIAL BODY.
B) SMITH HAS INDEED CHANGED. THE CONCESSIONS TO
HIM ARE NECESSARY BUT THE TRANSFER OF POWER IS UN-
MISTAKABLE. (MUZOREWA TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER BEFORE
THE MEETING THAT SMITH WOULD STEP DOWN AFTER THE ELEC-
TIONS. HE ALSO SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT THE WHITE REFEREN-
DUM WOULD PRECEDE THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM QOVERN-
MENT, BUT THIS WAS UNCLEAR.) BRITAIN MUST STICK WITH
THE SIX PRINCIPLES, THE BISHOP SAID, AND ONCE THOSE
POINTS HAVE BEEN SATISFIED, BRITAIN CAN NO LONGER
WITHHOLD RECOGNITION.
C) HE WARNED OWEN THAT BRITAIN SHOULD NOT MISUNDER-
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STAND THE PROSPECT OF CIVIL WAR IN ZIMBABWE. A WAR
THERE MAY WELL BE, BUT THE CONTESTANTS WILL BE ZANU AND
ZAPU. THE FIGHTING BETWEEN THE TWO HAS ALREADY STARTED.
IT IS A MISCONCEPTION TO THINK OF THE SIDES IN A WAR AS
"INTERNAL" AND "EXTERNAL."

4. OWEN REITERATED HIS APPEAL FOR A CONFERENCE, AND
THE BISHOP REPLIED HE WOULD LET HIM KNOW HIS ANSWER
LATER BUT THE DECISION WOULD BE INDIVIDUAL (BY THE
ANC) AND NOT COLLECTIVE (BY THE SALISBURY GROUP).

5. COMMENT: WHILE HIS VISIT TO THE STATES CANNOT BE
CONSIDERED TRIUMPHAL,/MUZOREWA SEEMED MORE CONFIDENT AND
LESS SULLEN THAN IN HIS CONVERSATIONS HERE TWO WEEKS

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AGO. ON THE CONFERENCE, HE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF WANTING TO SAY YES BUT NOT KNOWING HOW. HE SEEMS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS HAND OR WEAKEN IT, AND WHETHER A CONFERENCE WOULD TEND IN SOME MEASURE TO RECOGNIZE THE NEW SALISBURY GOVERNMENT OR IDENTIFY HIM WITH SMITH AND THE REGIME.

BREWSTER

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